



## THIS WEEK IN IRAQ

The Official Newsletter of the Multi-National Force - Iraq

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# Citizens provide vital information



Soldiers prepare to enter a building during an air assault in a small village outside of Salman Pak. The building, which was later destroyed, was an abandoned farmhouse being used by insurgents to stage attacks on Coalition forces. Photo by Sgt. Timothy Kingston.

### FORWARD OPERATING BASE

**HAMMER** — Using information provided by members of a Concerned Local Citizens group, Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, killed two insurgents, seized a weapons cache and destroyed an enemy stronghold during a nighttime air assault in Al Bawi, a small village outside of Salman Pak, Dec. 11.

The cache contained mortars, grenades, improvised weapon making materials and an unknown explosive compound.

"The Soldiers performed well," said Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Blount, from Hampton, Va., the scout platoon sergeant, Headquarters Company, 1-15th Inf. Regt. "They executed the plan as we rehearsed it. The biggest part of this and every other mission is the rehearsal. I tell my guys, 'This isn't our first air assault, but treat it like it is. Every mission is different. Don't get complacent'."

Insurgents had been using the farmhouse of a displaced family to stage attacks on Coalition forces and rival insurgent fac-

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## Iraqi National Police learn valuable skills

### FORWARD OPERATING BASE

**RUSTAMIYAH** — After four days of intense training, the fourth class of Iraqi National Policemen (NP) graduated from the leadership course, Nov. 29. The course is designed by Iraqis and taught by members of the 1st Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi National Police Military Transition Team (NPTT).

Maj. Robel Ramirez, 1-4-1 Battalion NPTT chief, said the policemen go through several training exercises during the week leading to an extensive exercise on the last day that combines all the tactics. The course is also taught according

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# Army looks at future of MRAP

**WASHINGTON** — The Army has not made a formal proposal to cut the number of mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles the service will buy, but officials are looking at the service's long-term need, Pentagon Press Secretary Geoff Morrell said yesterday.

"It would not surprise me if (the Army) made an adjustment," Morrell said during a news conference. "You saw the Marines have made an adjustment to what they feel is necessary for their future operations. But I do not believe that a formal proposal has been put forth yet by the Army in terms of asking the secretary or anybody else to adjust downward what they wish to buy in the long term."

The Defense Department will continue to buy as many MRAP vehicles as it can, as fast as it can, the press secretary said.

The vehicles have proven to be life-savers on the battlefield. The armored V-shaped hull deflects the effects of improvised explosive devices away from Soldiers or Marines riding in the vehicles. They've been especially effective against what the military calls "improvised explosive projectiles," IEDs designed especially to pierce armor.

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Capt. Aaron Wilson, from Watertown, N.Y., 203rd Brigade Support Battalion surgeon, checks a patient's blood pressure during a free medical operation in Wahida, Iraq, Dec. 11. Photo by Sgt. Natalie Rostek.

## Health clinic opens in Wahida

**COMBAT OUTPOST CLEARY** — Soldiers and leaders of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team attended a ribbon cutting ceremony Dec. 11 to open a Health Clinic in Wahida.

According to Capt. Matthew Givens, from Columbus, Ga., non-lethal effects officer for the 1-15th Inf. Regt., city council members came to the regiment leaders four months ago with concerns about the existing clinic's lack of space and equipment.

Council members and Soldiers decided to renovate the existing building by adding more examination rooms, an emergency room and an upstairs apartment for the doctors with two bedrooms, a kitchen and a bathroom.

"This clinic gives the doctors a lot more

to work with and they will be able to treat more patients," Givens said. "With the upstairs apartment, doctors can stay overnight. Before, the doctors would have to come from Baghdad early, then leave and go back to Baghdad that same night."

Wahida has no hospital, Givens said. The new clinic will serve as the city's primary medical facility. It has enough room to bed patients overnight instead of treating them and sending them home. "The clinic is going to be helpful to the Wahida citizens," Dr. Taher Awaed, clinic director, said through a translator. "The clinic is good, however, with a few more pieces of equipment, it will be perfect. But everyone is very grateful."

Givens said more equipment is on the

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